

the slavery of the larger number. The Assembly of the Three Estates, for instance, might be a feudal assembly, but it was an assembly representing civic as well as aristocratic interests. The municipality might be a collective feudal superior, but it at least represented not a territorial lord, but a body of citizens. The mediaeval emancipation movement thus made for reform, progress, as far as the circumstances of the time admitted. And it was the beginning of the far larger movement which we have yet to trace throughout modern times.

To that larger movement the Renaissance, taken in its widest meaning as what Mr Symonds calls "the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit," contributed a mighty impulse. Its *role* in the history of modern liberty can in truth hardly be overrated. We look in vain in the Middle Ages, alongside the political and social emancipation movement, for any evidence of a similarly large movement in favour of spiritual emancipation—the emancipation of the intellect and the conscience. Freedom of thought and conscience, freedom from the routine of dogma, authority, were unthinkable, except to a few daring minds who made but a passing impression on the conventional, the authorised, order of things in church or school. There might be champions of heterodoxy in theology and philosophy, but the authoritative system is the fact which we must keep in view. The system was supreme, dissent from it merely incidental. An Abelard, an Arnold of Brescia, a Roger Bacon, who chafed at the authoritative system and ventured to have ideas of their own, were as voices crying in the wilderness. *Sic volo*^ *sicjubeo*^ was the watchword of the demigod at Rome and his henchmen in pulpit and school. Some might dare to be heretics ; Frati-celli, Cathari, Albigensian sectaries might defy the demigod. But they had to reckon with a St Dominic and other avenging angels of the pope, and expiate their audacious independence with fire and sword, massacre, extermination. Some might dare to question history, to criticise ecclesiastical authority, to dissent from the decisions of conclave and council, to venture on new ground in theology and philosophy. We think of Scotus Erigena questioning transubstantiation, of Roger Bacon positing a more rational explanation of natural phenomena, of Abelard challenging the received opinions of the